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RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO PRIORITY 5496
RUEHHK/AMCONSUL HONG KONG PRIORITY 0897
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SIPDIS

STATE FOR G, CA/OCS/ACS/EAP, EAP/EX, EAP/MLS, EAP/EP, INR,
OES/STC (PBATES), OES/IHA (DSINGER AND NCOMELLA), AND MED
STATE PASS TO USAID FOR ANE AND GH (DCARROLL, SCLEMENTS AND
PCHAPLIN)
STATE PASS TO USTR (EBRYAN)
STATE PASS TO HHS/OGHA (WSTIEGER, EELVANDER AND ABHAT)
USDA PASS TO APHIS
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE FOR OSD/ISA/AP (LSTERN)
BANGKOK FOR RMO, CDC, USAID (MFRIEDMAN, JMACARTHUR AND MBRADY)
ROME FOR FAO

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TAGS: [TBIO](#) [KFLU](#) [AMED](#) [AMGT](#) [CASC](#) [EAGR](#) [PINR](#) [SOCI](#) [VM](#)
SUBJECT: VIETNAM - RESULTS OF AVIAN INFLUENZA JOINT ASSESSMENT
MISSION

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¶1. (SBU) Summary. A Joint Assessment Mission (JAM) to evaluate the Government of Vietnam's (GVN) Integrated Operational Program for Avian and Human Influenza (AHI), commonly referred to as the "Green Book," concluded on April 28, 2006. The Green Book sets forth a detailed medium- to long-term plan to control AHI, plan for a pandemic and establish frameworks for enhanced government coordination and donor financing. The total estimated cost for 2006-2010 is USD 225 million, which does not include costs of poultry industry restructuring or responding in the event of an actual pandemic. The Green Book was finalized for presentation at the APEC Avian Influenza (AI) Ministerial meeting in Danang on May 4-6. A follow-up donor conference will be held in June or July to coordinate donor activities and funding.

Joint Assessment Mission

¶2. (U) From April 17 through April 28, 2006, a Joint Assessment Mission (JAM) convened to evaluate the Vietnam Integrated Operational Program for Avian and Human Influenza (the "Green Book"). The JAM included approximately 34 members from the UN (FAO, WHO, UNICEF, UNDP), bilateral donors (AFD, DANIDA, NZAID, USAID), multilateral development banks (ADB, WB) and the

EC. It worked in collaboration with the GVN's AI Task Force, which includes representatives from 11 Ministries but most prominently the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) and the Ministry of Health (MOH). (Note: Details provided in this cable were provided by Ms. Molly Brady, AI Advisor, USAID Regional Development Mission/Asia, who participated in the JAM. End note.)

13. (U) The Green Book is based on the Integrated National Plan for Avian Influenza Control and Prevention (the "Red Book") that was presented by the GVN at the Beijing pledging conference in January 2006. The Green Book outlines the shift from an emergency to a medium- to long-term response to animal and human influenza (AHI), covers a time frame of 2006 to 2010, and is geared towards policymakers and donors. Its main purpose is to develop AHI control and pandemic prevention programs to be implemented by the GVN, enhance an integrated approach to AHI control, and provide frameworks for coordination and donor financing.

Schedule of Activities

14. (U) The assessment team was divided into three groups: animal health and livestock production, human health and institutional and financial frameworks. A cross-cutting team also focused on public awareness and behavior change activities. Each team met with government counterparts from central, provincial, district, commune and village levels in meetings in Hanoi and during field visits.

Animal Health and Livestock Production

15. (SBU) Vietnam has had no official outbreaks in poultry since December 2005. However, the JAM believes that small outbreaks are most probably ongoing along the border with China. Two rounds of vaccination of chickens and ducks have been

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completed. In the Green Book, the animal health group proposed a strategy moving from control to consolidation to eradication, predicated on strengthening veterinary services in order to control highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) and other potential zoonotic diseases, along with risk-based instead of blanket interventions. Recommended activities included expanding the capacity of the laboratory network, improving epidemiological expertise through training, implementing an early warning and response system to identify and respond to outbreaks quickly, and implementing a targeted vaccination strategy. In addition, operational research on surveillance and vaccination, strengthened control of poultry movement in markets and across international borders, improving biosecurity measures, and exploring mechanisms for compartmentalization were suggested as part of the animal health strategy.

16. (SBU) The JAM advised the GVN to take into account the importance of (and demand for) poultry production in small scale producers and backyard farmers when further developing its strategy to industrialize poultry farming, slaughtering and processing. Proposed activities for livestock production in the Green Book include only those related to AHI control, and not the implementation of the GVN's entire poultry sector industrialization strategy. Recommended activities include capacity building in the Department of Livestock Production and commune teams, support for alternative livelihoods, and poultry development pilot projects that meet economic, social and environmental criteria.

Human Health

17. (SBU) Vietnam has had no new human cases of H5N1 since November 2005 and is now focusing on reducing the risk and potential impact of a human pandemic by strengthening preventive medicine and curative care. The human health team recommended including activities in the Green Book such as improving routine surveillance, expanding research, implementing an early warning and response system, expanding laboratory capacity and improving

case management. Curative care capacity should be enforced within the existing system by strengthening intensive care capacity in hospitals, the referral network and infection control procedures. In addition, pandemic response plans should be prepared at all hospitals to address surge capacity, staff responsibilities and patient flows. Funds for response to an actual pandemic were not included in the totals for the Green Book.

Institutional and Financial Framework

18. (SBU) A new coordination network was proposed in the Green Book that expands the mandate of the National Steering Committee for Avian and Human Influenza and adds other ministries, such as the Ministry of Education, to the committee. Sectoral responsibilities would then be addressed through a new sub-committee in MARD and an existing sub-committee in MOH. Cross-cutting working groups on public awareness and behavior change, monitoring and evaluation, and capacity building would also be formed. Donor coordination would be strengthened through the establishment of a multi-donor financing framework that would coordinate donor activities and contributions from grants, loans and credits.

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Challenges

19. (SBU) The JAM identified certain challenges that might occur in implementing this medium- to long-term strategy. Vigilance and internal and external support may decrease over time, especially as outbreaks are halted and AHI is seen as an on-going (and not emergency) problem. Absorptive capacity remains a challenge, as there are current limits on human staffing capacity, within the government and within agencies providing technical assistance, and infrastructure. Ongoing effort is needed to ensure cooperation between veterinarian and human health systems. Decentralization presents a continued challenge of implementation and budgetary coordination between different levels. More specifically, poultry industry restructuring will need to take into account social, economic and environmental criteria as well as keep pace with changes needed to the regulatory framework. With increased diagnostic capacity in animal and human health sectors comes the need for continual quality assurance and bio-safety, and the increased training and recurrent costs this incurs.

Outcome

110. (SBU) The Green Book will be presented at the APEC Ministerial Meeting on HPAI in Danang, Vietnam on 4-6 May 2006, followed by a donor conference in June/July 2006 to coordinate inputs and activities. The total estimated Green Book budget, which may change, is USD 225 million for the period 2006-2010. This includes USD 31.2 million for enhanced coordination activities, USD 91.9 million for the animal health sector and USD 102.4 million for the human health sector. Of the total budget, the GVN will contribute approximately 50%. The overall donor commitment, as of January 2006, is USD 47 million. The Green Book budget does not include the USD 225 million of government and private sector costs for poultry industry restructuring, most of which is to provide low-interest loans to poultry farmers to upgrade their farms.

Lessons Learned

111. (SBU) Comment: This was the first coordinated assessment of a national AHI control plan. The attempt to be inclusive was a valiant one. However, in part because the team was so large, much time was spent on internal discussions and debate. In addition, the deadline of May 4 contributed to the rushed process of adequately consulting with GVN authorities at all levels. The Green Book ended up being almost entirely rewritten from an earlier draft presented by the GVN on April 12. The assessment process was rather hasty given that the entire first week was devoted to official meetings with GVN counterparts. While the

"final" draft will be presented in a the APEC Ministerial in Danang, the costing section will be revised in the coming weeks, the activities will need to be further elaborated and donor activities and funds still remain to be coordinated. From a regional perspective, however, the JAM process, and more importantly the outcome it produced, provides one of the best examples of how a developing host country government can work together with bilateral donors and international agencies to develop a closely coordinated, technically sound strategic plan for AI. End Comment.

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Marine